

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 6323

E.O.11652 GDS

TAGS PFOR

SUBJ JAPANESE TALKS WITH SAUDI OIL MINISTER YAMANI

1. AMBASSADOR KITAHARA, JAPANESE PERM REP IN GENEVA, CALLED ON CHARGE LATE YESTERDAY AFTERNOON (NOV 28) OSTENSIBLY TO INQUIRE ABOUT WHAT INFORMATION WE HAD HERE RE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCE IN GENEVA NEXT MONTH. CHARGE INDICATED THAT WE HAD NO OFFICIAL WORD OUT OF WASHINGTON ABOUT ANY ARRANGEMENTS BUT REFERRED TO A JUST RECEIVED UPI WIRE REPORT THAT A STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THE US AND SOVIETS INVITED PRINCIPAL PARTIES CONCERNED TO AN ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE CONFERENCE IN GENEVA NEXT MONTH. HE ALSO NOTED A UPI REPORT OUT OF NEW YORK TO THE EFFECT THAT THE SECRETARY GENERAL EXPECTS TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE THAN THAT AS AN OBSERVER AT THE PEACE TALKS. KITAHARA FELT THAT THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL SHOULD NOT HAVE AND PROBABLY COULD NOT PLAY A PRINCIPAL ROLE IN THE TALKS. INSTEAD HE FELT THAT WALDHEIM WOULD BE USEFUL IN CARRYING OUT OR EXECUTING DECISIONS AND AGREEMENTS TAKEN AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE.

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2. KITAHARA THEN REFERRED TO A CONVERSATION HE HAD LAST SUNDAY IN

GENEVA WITH SAUDI ARABIAN OIL MINISTER, AHMED ZAKI YAMANI, WHICH LASTED ALMOST TWO HOURS. AT FIRST YAMANI WAS AGGRESSIVE, SOMEWHAT ARROGANT AND TOUGH IN CRITICIZING JAPAN FOR NOT COOPERATING MORE WITH THE ARAB COUNTRIES AND FOR NOT TAKING A STRONG STAND AGAINST ISRAEL. YAMANI SAID THAT JAPAN SHOULD BREAK RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL AS THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAD DONE AND THAT THEREAFTER THE ARAB EMBARGO ON OIL FOR JAPAN WOULD BE LIFTED. KITAHARA REPLIED BY POINTING OUT THAT NEITHER YAMANI NOR OTHER ARABS SHOULD MAKE THE MISTAKE OF EQUATING JAPAN WITH AFRICAN COUNTRIES. KITAHARA TOLD YAMANI THAT JAPAN HAD GONE ABOUT AS FAR AS IT COULD GO IN THE STATEMENTS ALREADY MADE FOR THE ARAB SIDE AND POINTED OUT TO HIM THAT JAPAN HAD BEEN "HUMILIATED" BY ARAB INSISTENCE THAT IT BREAK WITH ISRAEL. KITAHARA SAID THAT THOSE AFRICAN STATES WHICH BROKE REALTIONS WITH ISRAEL WERE POOR UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES WITH NOTHING TO LOSE AND EVERYTHING TO GAIN BY SIDING WITH THE ARABS, WHEREAS JAPAN AS A HIGHLY INDUSTRIALIZED AND TECHNICALLY ADVANCED COUNTRY HAD TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL SIDES AND THAT BY DOING SO COULD SERVE THE ARAB CAUSE BETTER. KITAHARA TOLD YAMANI THAT THE ARABS COULD EXPECT JAPAN TO RENDER TECHNICAL, ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT AID AND ASSISTANCE BUT THAT IF THE OIL EMBARGO AGAINST JAPAN CONTINUED AND JAPAN SUFFERED ECONOMICALLY AS A RESULT IT COULD NOT RENDER SUCH HELP. WHEN YAMANI REMARKED THAT SOME FRIENDLY COUNTRIES IN EUROPE SUCH AS FRANCE AND ENGLAND WERE PROVIDING ARMS TO THE ARAB COUNTRIES, KITAHARA REPLIED THAT FRANCE AND ENGLAND WERE SELLING NOT GIVING THEM AWAY AND THAT THE ARABS WERE NOT GETTING MUCH OF A BARGAIN ON THAT SCORE. KITAHARA PRESSED THE POINT WITH YAMANI THAT IT WAS IN THE ARAB'S INTERESTS NOT TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR JAPAN'S ECONOMIC DECLINE IF IT EXPECTED JAPAN TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON A PROMISED PROGRAM OF ECONOMIC HELP AND ASSISTANCE. TOWARD THE END OF THE TWO HOUR DISCUSSION WITH YAMANI KITAHARA DETECTED A GENERAL SOFTENING OF ATTITUDE TOWARD THE JAPANESE POSITION AND VIEWPOINT. KITAHARA WAS CONVINCED THAT YAMANI HAD TELEPHONED HIS FOREIGN MINISTER IN ALGIERS THE SAME DAY TO CONVEY SYMPATHETICALLY THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS TALKS WITH THE JAPANESE.

3. COMMENT: KITAHARA CHARACTERIZED YAMANI AS BEING YOUNG, NAIVE AND INEXPERIENCED IN GENERAL WORLD AFFAIRS AND POLITICS, AND FELT YAMANI HAD MUCH TO LEARN IN THIS BUSINESS. WHILE THIS ASSESSMENT MAY OR MAY NOT BE FAIR, IT REFLECTS GENERALLY A PERSONAL

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DISPLEASURE IN HAVING TO DEAL AND PLEAD WITH THE ARAB EMISSARY FOR JAPAN'S SURVIVAL. IT WAS NOT EASY FOR KITAHARA TO TELL YAMANI THAT

THE ARABS HAD HUMILIATED THE JAPANESE BY PUBLICLY INSISTING THAT JAPAN BREAK WITH ISRAEL. APPARENTLY REFLECTING HIS GOVERNMENT'S VIEWPOINT, KITAHARA IS SOMEWHAT MORE OPTIMISTIC NOW ABOUT ARAB OIL INTENTIONS VIS-A-VIS JAPAN THAN WAS THE SITUATION A WEEK OR TWO AGO. FOR THE LONG TERM, HOWEVER, KITAHARA FELT THAT

JAPAN GENERALLY WOULD HAVE TO RE-EXAMINE ITS FOREIGN POLICIES,
BUT HE DID NOT GO INTO ANY DETAILS ON THIS POINT. HE DID MENTION,
HOWEVER, THAT JAPAN NOW IS BEGINNING TO LOSE ITS ALLERGY TO THINGS
ATOMIC AND IS ADJUSTING TO AND ACCEPTING THE IDEA THAT ATOMIC
ENERGY FACILITIES MAY PROVIDE INCREASED POWER SOURCES.BASSIN

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